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Report of the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women**

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 56/125 on the critical situation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the General Assembly decided to establish a working group to make recommendations to the General Assembly on the future operation of the Institute. Accordingly, it was decided to postpone the twenty-second session of the Board of Trustees, scheduled for 2002, pending the outcome of the working group. To inform the Board of Trustees and seek their views and guidance on the current status of the Institute, a brief on INSTRAW developments during 2001 and current status of the Institute (see annex) was prepared by INSTRAW and sent electronically to members of the Board. The Board approved the work programme and estimated budgetary requirements for 2002.

II. Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council

2. Having considered the brief, the Board of Trustees:

(a) Took note of the brief on INSTRAW developments during 2001 and current status of the Institute;

(b) Welcomed the fact that the Institute and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for INSTRAW kept the Board informed of the activities

* E/2002/100.

** The document was submitted late to the conference services due to the late receipt of comments from the members of the Board of Trustees.

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undertaken during 2001 and other important developments pertinent to the operation of the Institute;

(c) Expressed its appreciation to the General Assembly for the adoption of resolution 56/125, by which a working group was established to make recommendations on the future operation of the Institute. The Board also welcomed the support of Member States in providing INSTRAW with the resources required to enable the Institute to continue to operate until the General Assembly has considered the recommendations of the working group;

(d) Agreed that, in view of the fact that the twenty-second session of the Board of Trustees has been postponed and the terms of the President and Vice-President of the Board come to an end on 30 June 2002, Antigoni Karali-Dimitriadi, Rapporteur for the twenty-first session of the Board, should assume the Presidency until new elections for a full Bureau are held;

(e) Took note of the recent appointment of an Interim Manager/Director to oversee the work of the Institute pending the outcome of the working group;

(f) Expressed the hope that the working group established in compliance with paragraph 4 (a) of General Assembly resolution 56/125 will yield viable measures for addressing the Institute's current difficulties. The Board also expects that the implementation of such measures will be carried out with due consideration to the achievements of INSTRAW and the potential benefits of its Gender Awareness Information and Networking System (GAINS). It further expressed the hope that in the implementation of such measures due consideration will be given to the well-being of the Institute's staff;

(g) Requested the Secretary-General to keep the Board duly informed regarding the developments, recommendations and decisions that emanate from the working group.

Annex

Brief on INSTRAW developments during 2001 and current status of the Institute

I. Introduction

1. The present document outlines the efforts and progress made in the implementation of the programmes of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) during the period from May 2001 to January 2002 and describes how the Gender Awareness Information and Networking System (GAINS) has been used as a tool to enhance these programmes. It also highlights new institutional challenges that have emerged and the critical situation of the Institute.

II. Executive direction and management

2. In response to General Assembly resolution 55/219 of 12 February 2001, during the second quarter of 2001 the Director undertook, as an urgent priority, the development of a new fund-raising strategy. The strategy included a list of potential funding sources as well as promotional material on the INSTRAW mandate and a new working modality.

3. Other endeavours undertaken by the Director for increasing the support of Governments to INSTRAW included: (a) missions to Italy, Spain and the European Union; (b) a new proposal for the implementation of subsequent phases of GAINS, namely phases III and IV; (c) preparation of a portfolio of special extrabudgetary projects for submission to Member States; and (d) follow-up actions with Member States, including the Government of the Host Country, to pursue the payment of pledges made to the Institute during previous years which remain outstanding.

4. Since the departure of the former Director at the end of July 2001 and pending the outcome of the working group on the future operations of INSTRAW established under General Assembly resolution 56/125, the Institute was managed by an Officer-in-Charge, in close consultation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. The executive and representational functions were performed under guidance of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women.

5. During August 2001, the Office of Internal Oversight Services conducted an audit on the operation and financial management of INSTRAW as a follow-up to a previous audit conducted by the Office in 1997. The findings and recommendations are contained in a report to the General Assembly (A/56/907).

III. Implementation of the work programme through the Gender Awareness Information and Networking System[a]

6. As the INSTRAW Board of Trustees approved the proposed strategic focus, work plan and budgetary requirements for 2001 at its twenty-first session, the Institute continued to implement the work plan. With regard to the implementation of the Gender Awareness Information and Networking System (GAINS), the two main objectives of this work plan were: (i) to continue the expansion of GAINS functionality through the implementation of phases III and IV;[b] and (ii) to promote the empowerment of women and gender equality through training and capacity-building in information and communication technologies for women's organizations.

7. The following table illustrates the status of implementation of phases III and IV of GAINS.

Table 1
Status of implementation of phases III and IV of GAINS

Planned	*Status of implementation*
(i) Pilot-testing collaborative research methodologies, including delivery of concrete research outputs (state-of-the-art synthesis papers; policy recommendations resulting from collaborative research and regional and international virtual conferences conducted through GAINS)	Implemented through the project on men's roles in ending gender-based violence
(ii) Pilot-testing e-training:	Not implemented
Development of e-training strategy	
Development of e-training modules	
Conduct of e-training	

[a] The Gender Awareness Information and Networking System (GAINS) is a web-based integrated knowledge and information management system aimed at facilitating collaborative production, management and dissemination of research and training knowledge and information. The development of GAINS was initiated in 1999 as a result of a proposal made by the Secretary-General and General Assembly resolution 54/140, requesting that INSTRAW develop this system as a means of revitalizing the Institute.

[b] Implementation of phases I and II were reported on at the twenty-first session of the Board of Trustees. All components of these phases were completed with the exception of the design and implementation of monitoring and evaluation methodology for GAINS, which remains to be implemented.

Planned	*Status of implementation*
(iii) Expansion and consolidation of the GAINS network through:	Partially implemented
Development of network work plans	
Selection of advisory board	Ongoing
Conducting collaborative research; training and information; dissemination activities	
(iv) Further expansion, refinement and maintenance of database	Ongoing
(v) Expansion of GAINS into other official United Nations languages	Spanish web site, network and database updated and expanded

Pilot-testing of collaborative research methodology

8. In April 2001, INSTRAW launched a research project on men's roles and responsibilities in ending gender-based violence to pilot test its new web-based, collaborative research methodologies. For this project, the Institute set up an ad hoc network-based community consisting of 560 members. Through a listserv, this community participated in a virtual seminar series and engaged in discussions of working papers. It also established a separate web site that included facilities for participants to share links and resources and conduct online discussion forums and seminars.

9. The virtual seminar series consisted of an online/e-mail-based series of seminars focusing on men's roles in ending gender-based violence. During the seminars, interested partners discussed specific aspects of the issue, facilitated by a moderator and background discussion papers. A total of four seminars were conducted on the following themes:

(a) How can conversations around men, "masculinities" and power help us understand and end gender-based violence?

(b) Learning from men's pro-feminist movements and gender activism around the world;

(c) Connecting ending gender-based violence to other development and social justice goals — exposing the linkages;

(d) What you can do, from individual advocacy to national campaigns, including problems and success stories of the Autumn Campaign — International White Ribbon.

One final seminar wrapped up the discussions of the four seminars, presented the results of an evaluation survey conducted with participants and drew lessons learned from the project.

10. In order to broaden the dialogue concerning men, masculinities and ending gender-based violence, INSTRAW launched a series of working papers. It was envisioned that the papers in this series would bring new ideas to the existing body of knowledge by highlighting research and case studies that may not have had other outlets for publication. Drafts of the working papers were published online. Final versions of the working papers are currently being edited for publication in a single volume. INSTRAW has obtained an agreement from the United Nations to cover the printing costs of the publication. A book launch in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme is planned for June 2002.

Pilot-testing e-training

11. Owing to the lack of specialized expertise, limited progress was made in developing and pilot-testing e-training methodology and projects. INSTRAW contracted an e-training specialist who developed a training strategy paper for INSTRAW. However, no specific strategies for e-training were proposed. In view of the persistent instabilities confronting INSTRAW, its Board of Trustees and other relevant bodies need to examine its training role and mandate seriously in line with its institutional capacity and competitive advantage.

Expansion and consolidation of the GAINS network

12. Special efforts were made to expand and consolidate the INSTRAW platform of networks. The number of GAINS network members continues to grow as requests for applications are received on a regular basis.

13. The following table illustrates the progress made in building the GAINS network from March 2001 to February 2002.

Table 2
Growth of the GAINS network, 2001-2002

	Focal points	*Regional nodes*	*Research organizations and individual researchers*	*Trainers and training organizations*	*Specialists in information and communication technologies*
March 2001	99	27	93	31	16
February 2002	132	47	171	84	37

14. In May 2001, a needs assessment survey was conducted by INSTRAW among its network member organizations with an e-mail account (a total of 180). The assessment was designed to obtain information on the members' main fields of interest; the type of information the member would like to receive; the type of information they would like to post on the web site; their preferred type of involvement and support through GAINS; the manner in which they would like to share information with other members; and geographical and institutional background information on network member organizations. Some 59 organizations responded, a response rate of 32.7 per cent.

15. In response to the needs of its network members, in June 2001 INSTRAW launched the GainsNet listserv, which allows members of the gender community to communicate among themselves and share important information, experiences and views. As of now, the mailing list has 257 subscribers.

16. It must be pointed out, however, that the Institute was not able to consolidate the networks in terms of the establishment of network advisory boards and the development of network work plans.

17. The Institute also made efforts to streamline the navigation of its web site, making information easier to find. Further work will be undertaken to improve the navigation of the site and its accessibility to users with low-grade technology. In addition, a new web site structure has been developed and a new content has been produced which is ready to be integrated into a re-designed web site.

Further expansion, refinement and maintenance of the database

18. One of the important objectives of the INSTRAW work plan for 2001 was the further refinement and maintenance of the Database of Gender-based Resources. The database now consists of approximately 1,900 entries in both English and Spanish covering a range of issues across the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action.[c] It is particularly strong on the INSTRAW areas of strategic interest, including gender-based violence; conflict and its prevention; men and masculinities in relation to gender-based violence; gender and information and communication technologies; gender aspects of ageing; and trade and macroeconomics.

19. Apart from substantially increasing the number of resources in the database, during 2001, INSTRAW undertook work aimed at improving the functionality of the database by making the search mechanism and the search result displays more user-friendly. New data were added within the areas of ageing, women and information and communication technologies, and violence against women. An annotated bibliography on gender and information and communication technologies, including resources on the Web, was elaborated in addition to a bibliography on women prisoners and the penal system. There were continuing efforts to expand the Spanish-language resources in the database.

Expansion of GAINS into other official United Nations languages

20. Owing to limited funds, GAINS was not translated into other official United Nations languages as requested by Member States. However, the following were accomplished:

(a) Expansion of the GAINS network among different language groups;

(b) Circulation of the *INSTRAW News* in English and Spanish, while an informal translation into Arabic was pioneered on a voluntary basis by a GAINS network member;

(c) Expansion of the GAINS database, with resources in Spanish.

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[c] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

Other GAINS-related developments

21. Several efforts were made towards improving the technical infrastructure of GAINS as well as the web site and database capabilities of GAINS during 2001. The Institute installed a new telephone connection to provide better and faster access of INSTRAW staff to the web site for the purposes of uploading changes and entering data into the database. In this regard, the Institute acquired the needed hardware and purchased the software necessary for the improvement and expansion of GAINS and its services.

IV. Financial and administrative issues

General support services

22. During the period under review, the essential administrative, financial and logistical services required for the Institute's operations and GAINS activities were provided by the administrative staff under the supervision of the Officer-in-Charge. Major tasks of the unit included providing assistance to the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts of the United Nations Secretariat for the preparation of the budgetary implications resulting from Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/40 and General Assembly resolution 56/125 regarding the Institute's operational viability beyond the year 2001. Following the audit by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (see para. 5 above), administrative decisions concerning the engagement of consultants and budgetary and personnel matters were cleared by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for INSTRAW and the Executive Office of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat.

Financial performance

23. The budgetary provisions discussed by the Board of Trustees for the Institute's core activities during 2001 were duly made available by the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts of the United Nations Secretariat. The resources provided were utilized on the implementation of the programme and operational activities outlined in the INSTRAW strategic programme and work plan, which focused on the further development of the GAINS methodology. Moreover, the level of expenditure actually incurred during the year was lower than anticipated owing to a freeze on the recruitment of the Chief Administrative Officer, as well as the vacancy produced by the departure of the former Director at the end of July 2001.

INSTRAW resource base

24. Despite repeated efforts to increase the level of governmental financial support to INSTRAW, the voluntary contributions received at its Trust Fund during 2001 amounted to $316,201. The Institute's expenditures during 2001 were below budgeted levels. Consequently, the resources available were sufficient to meet the Institute's requirements for the year, thus obviating the need to use the one-time regular budget subvention of $800,000 granted by the General Assembly in

December 2000 (see resolution 55/219). At the time of preparation of this brief, it is estimated that the balance of the INSTRAW Trust Fund, as at 31 December 2001, amounted approximately to $130,000, in addition to a reserve of $200,000, which has been set aside to cover final expenditures and liabilities in the event that the Institute must be closed down. Aside from these funds, during the 2001 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, held in New York in November 2001, the Institute received pledges in the amount of $19,365 in support of its 2002 activities.

25. At its fifty-sixth session, the General Assembly decided to disburse a provision of $650,000 as a subvention to the Institute, to ensure the continuation of its operations in 2002 (see resolution 56/240 A, para. 3).

Staffing resources

26. The D-2 post of Director was filled from 1 January through 31 July 2001. Pending the decision of the intergovernmental working group on the future operation of INSTRAW, in February 2002 it was decided to appoint an Interim Manager/Director. Owing to personal circumstances, the Interim Manager/Director was not able to assume her functions at INSTRAW, and another staff member will be appointed shortly to manage the Institute, pending the resolution of the situation of the Interim Manager/Director. As regards the Institute's Professional staff, the essential administrative services required for the Institute's operation have been provided by an Acting Administrative Officer. The other two Professional posts of gender analysts were filled by staff at the P-3 and P-2 levels. The five General Service posts approved in the 2001 staffing table remained filled throughout the year. The additional expertise required for the implementation of the Institute's new working method through GAINS was provided through the engagement of a team of international consultants who performed under the supervision of the INSTRAW Director and core staff. Up to December 2001, the GAINS team included a manager, a network coordinator, a research coordinator and a systems administrator. In addition, other support staff were temporarily engaged as individual contractors to provide the support services required for the functioning of GAINS, particularly in the areas of database inputting, networking and production of research materials.

V. Prospects for 2002 and beyond

27. In the report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, the Secretary-General advocated for the support of Member States to INSTRAW by stating that:

> "Despite the persistent difficulties and uncertainties that INSTRAW has confronted during the past two years, it has managed to secure minimal resources with which to respond to the mandates given by the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Given that the Institute has begun to achieve tangible results through GAINS, the Assembly may wish to decide the scope within which INSTRAW could operate beyond 2001 in a productive and cost-effective manner" (A/56/279, para. 25).

28. Despite these appeals, voluntary contributions from Member States have not been forthcoming.

29. In view of the limited resources available, INSTRAW, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts of the United Nations Secretariat, prepared a work programme and estimated budgetary requirements for 2002, which was approved by the Board of Trustees. This required a further reduction in the scope of the Institute's activities.

30. It is anticipated that the approved budget will allow the Institute to operate at a minimum level until the end of 2002, pending the decision of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the future of the Institute, to be made on the recommendation of the working group appointed under General Assembly resolution 56/125.